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NEWS

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Number of Delta Bison Hunt Permits Reduced

The number of permits for the Delta bison hunt is being reduced from 120 to 65 following surveys that indicate a smaller herd size than expected.

Current plans are to issue 35 bull and 30 cow permits for the fall 2005 hunt.

The Department's 2005–2006 Alaska Spring Drawing Permit Supplement stated that 60 bull and 60 cows permits would be issued for the 2005 hunting season, but the number of permits are adjusted based on the most recent population surveys.

Seventy-five permits were issued for the 2004 hunt, and Department staff expected the herd size to increase in 2005, allowing 120 permits to be issued this year.

Bison population surveys are conducted after bison have finished calving in early June. The herd size is currently about 80 bison less than was predicted, with a reduction in both adults and calves. The exact cause of the smaller herd size has not been determined, but will be a focus of this year's management efforts.

Additional population surveys are scheduled this summer. If they result in a larger population estimate, additional permits will be awarded before the start of the hunting season.

The Department manages Delta bison population size based on objectives in the Delta Bison Management Plan. The Plan is written with input from the Delta Bison Working Group (a public advisory panel) as well as Fish and Game Advisory Committees and the general public.

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